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## American Art Journal.

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## ITALIAN OPERA AT THEATRE FRANCAIS.

Verdi's perennial opera, "Il Trovatore," was twice performed in 14th street during last week. The second performance proved a great improvement upon the first, as Massimiliani and wife replaced Tamaro and Mlle. De Gebele as Manrico and Azucena, while the general movement of scene, orchestra, and chorus went considerably smoother, albeit scenic poverty was yet too palpable in that house, for even moderate expectation.

Signora De Rossi enacted Azucena's character, and delivered her trying music with dramatic fire, correctness and befitting color, making a great advance upon her performance in that role at the Academy. Marked enthusiasm rewarded her efforts to attain what is almost impossible—Verdi's ideal Azucena.

Massimiliani, from his serenade to the finale, enlisted ardent feeling of admiration for his splendid voice, free command of Manrico's score, the passion and sentiment he displayed generally, and remarkable enthusiasm by his spirited "Di quella pira." We have seldom witnessed a performance more worthy a grand heroic tenor. Its sole blemish occurred in the Miserere, but he cannot be justly censured for other's shortcomings.

Orlandini justified, in brilliant style, the warm commendation we gave to his Conte di Luna at the Academy, both in solo and concerted music, and his "Il Balen" roused a tempest of applause, equal to Di Luna's storm of passion there described.

Mlle. Boschetti's vocal means and schooling are inadequate to Leonora's passionate music, and when put to heavy work on high notes, her voice thins into a shrill, colorless tone, which repels all sympathy with the singer and disfigures the expression intended. Her appearance is ever winsome, and some points of her execution, in light, florid passages, meet hearty approval.

Barili's Ferrando is ever acceptable. The chorus lacked strength and show of military force, but the band waited upon the singers in good artistic fashion.

Among the most enthusiastic and demonstrative in tokens of applause, on the second night, were many of Ristori's dramatic company, who seemed to be highly delighted with De Rossi, Massimiliani, and Orlandini, expressing that delight freely in *bravi*.

## IRVING HALL.

Miss Mary H. Cooke's complimentary concert at this popular saloon was not favored with propitious weather, and the attendance fell short of reasonable expectation; but those present extended all possible encouragement to the performers and the beneficiary, so far as enthusiastic applause could possibly compensate them for lack of a grand public to propitiate, or welcome in glad contribution to a deserving occasion.

Miss Mary Cooke seemed not to be in good voice or spirit, for her best display of voice or vocal accomplishment; but her sister Rosa's performance showed the accustomed strength and vigor, that attracted public favor in theatrical incidents, here.

Miss Stockton did not appear—being reported as sick, from over exertion in English opera the previous night, and we therefore lost a hearing of John Brougham's song, "Happy as a Bird," written and composed expressly for her use.

Mr. Simpson acquitted himself marvelously well, despite a cold in the head, which he really experienced, but cleverly overcame in his ballad singing, which had the old charm for all present.

Mr. Jacoby is a young pianist, a pupil of the Conservatory of Leipzig; he exhibits good schooling, but is not yet sufficiently prepared for solo performances. But he promises well.

Master Mollenhauer played quite acceptably for so youthful a violinist, in solo pieces, not easily attainable by novices.

## SIGNOR MACCAFERI'S FAREWELL CONCERT.

Signor Maccaferi's appeal to benevolent feeling on his parting for "L'Italia Una" and Bologna, his native city, found but a faint response at Irving Hall, on Saturday evening last, although he, by kind proffer of aid from musicians, choristers, and eminent operatic artists, presented a very imposing programme to public interest. His eccentric dealings with operatic managers and their public, had created an unfavorable impression towards him—so unfavorable that his artistic merits were inadequate to efface it—and public sympathy was, therefore, vainly invoked for a dramatic tenor in needy circumstances, who desired to

attain the means of returning home and there recruit his seriously impaired health.

When aid to a brother artist is freely proffered, as in this case, we deem it a critic's duty and earnest desire to speak leniently of defects, or rather to omit mention of all save that which can be heartily commended.

The really artistic, gratifying, and in every respect satisfactory performances of that concert were given by Signori Mazzoleni and Antonucci. The first named gave a ballad from "Don Cesare di Bazan,"—an opera written by Eversari—and the leading tenor part expressly suited to his large vocal means and grand style, with such glowing color, free command of its extreme sweep of the scales, up and down, and that electrifying tone which, combined with perfection of phrasing and enunciation, true intonation and entire avoidance of substitutes for *voce di petto* ever awaken enthusiasm here; that immense excitement followed, and nothing short of more in that style could allay it.

Antonucci once more vindicated, in a hall adapted to free production of tone, his well deserved reputation and high artistic rank among *bassi cantanti*. Singing like that by a *basso* is seldom heard, now that roaring and disregard of tune and phrasing, by public singers who prefer making a sensation to executing their music in proper fashion, has become a chronic habit. As a specimen of smooth tone and graceful execution by a concert bass, that performance of Signor Antonucci may be commended, not merely to public favor, such as rewarded him in this concert, but to serious consideration by basses who aspire to fame in a concert hall.

Signor Orlandini's voice suffered from our fickle climate and he made a less satisfactory performance than usual, for that very obvious misfortune, and in one instance the hoarseness, which had been apparent from his first note, almost caused a break in a trying passage. His artistic rank was not affected in the least, by that slight accident in musicianly estimation.

We prefer not to speak of Signor Maccaferi's use of a high robust tenor, and pass by the other singers who appeared for a benevolent object, merely noting Ardavani's non-appearance, in conformity with his custom on such occasions, and the imperfect choral performance for lack of proper accompaniment.

## IRVING HALL—THIRD SACRED CONCERT.

Irving Hall could not well contain, last Sunday evening, all who desired to attend these highly popular concerts. Their attraction, ever great, has now become irresistible since Mr. Theo. Thomas' efficient orchestra became part of the programme for each night. Their part in this last concert included an entire

Beethoven Symphony, Mozart's "Turkish March," Nicolai's overture to "Merry Wives of Windsor," and fantasia on Wagner's "Tannhauser," and was so well performed as to call out enthusiastic commendation from all. With the selection of Nicolai's overture many were not so well pleased.

Mme. Johannsen won golden opinions by her admirable school and smooth vocalization, exhibited in a selection from "Wm. Tell," a lullaby given in answer to its rapturous encore, and Schubert's charming "Serenade." Her voice was not in such admirable condition as at the Rullman concert, yet sufficiently under control to make her execution free, true, gracious, and remarkably acceptable to her public.

Mr. Letsch has previously, in concert exhibition, developed extraordinary virtuoso talent in executing difficulties upon a trombone, but his agility in this concert surpassed all preceding developments of his control over that rather elephantine instrument, which in Paris needed six independent valves, contrived by Sax, to make brilliant play upon it. He affects the tremolo effect too much, barring that, he may challenge competition here or elsewhere in trombone execution.

Mr. Heind's flute solo was a brilliant show of execution in variations, but he treated his theme inartistically, and his tone lacked mellowness and body, while his double tonguing betrayed too much spasmodic effort.

Mr. Arthur Matthison, of whom report spoke very warmly, was suffering from a sickness which attacked him on his first arrival in this country, consequently he did not do himself justice in any way, although his efforts were warmly received, and he won an encore for his first song. We hope to hear him when he has fully recovered his powers.

Mr. Colby's excellent accompaniments were in this concert marred by one blemish—not his own, however,—in a square piano forte slightly tuned down to accommodate the flute, as no strength or body of tone could be given to accompaniment, on such an instrument.

#### SACRED CONCERT AT THE OLYMPIC THEATRE.

The second concert given by Mr. Grover at his theatre on Sunday evening had a fair audience. That house is not remarkable for musical adaptation, but the effect of Mr. Neuendorf's excellent orchestral performances might be much improved by placing the musicians in front of the stage. Now their notes are scattered and lessened in force by position far back of the foot lights.

Mr. Grover secured a most competent conductor when he engaged Mr. Neuendorf, who, very youthful, is remarkably accomplished in that all important department of musical performance. He bounded into fame at Grover's German Opera last spring in the late

Academy of Music, and not a few were puzzled to account for the great ability he displayed there, in directing grand vocal and orchestral combinations, until they learned that Carl Anschutz had instructed him. At the Olympic Sacred Concerts he maintains that public confidence he then fully received, and has, we learn, upon Mr. Anschutz's recommendation, the conductorship in the grand Ristori performances at le Theatre Francais. With the material check to public estimation, interposed by the placing of his orchestra at the Olympic, there is, of course, less opportunity to bring out the nice effects and strong points of the works selected for their execution, but a general public would accept the orchestral part of the programme without demur.

Mesdames Rotter and Frederici and Messrs. Himmer and Weinlich filled up the spaces between the grand orchestra's performance in a satisfactory manner. All of them need the excitement of grand opera to develop their best traits in song, and lacking that stimulant, they treat music confided to their interpretation too coldly. The skeleton notes are given, but not the fitting color and warmth that should clothe them.

#### DRAMATIC.

NIBLO'S GARDEN.—The absorbing theatrical sensation, preceding Ristori's advent, was found in Barras's "Black Crook," produced by Mr. Wheatley at his elegant theatre, on Wednesday, September 12th, before a crowded audience of critical dilettanti, and every night since performed to similar masses of sensation lovers.

Its first performance, like most other spectacular pieces, which require intricate machinery to operate them successfully, ran on to 1½ A. M., but judicious pruning and skillful appliance of means to ends, brought the *finale* on Monday last not much beyond 11 P. M. The plot and literature of "Black Crook" are decidedly composite, its movement and general action revealing suggestions from "Der Freischutz," "Faust," and other similar works of *diablerie*, while its dialogue wears a very patchy, inelegant, and repulsive aspect.

The unquestioned success of this grand spectacular drama arises from the marked interest for the public ear which beautiful conceptions and really admirable treatment of them on canvass, or with trick devices, fine groupings, and grand tableaux, invariably excite with our public.

Its first scene propitiates all vision with its admirable presentation of natural beauty; the fifth augments visibly, that favorable impression. The fourth scene of act second is a revelation of refined art, wrought gracefully out in a set, which for combination of good effects rarely can be equalled upon our stage. All harmonizes and blends perfectly to realize an exquisite taste and fancy in device. The great scene of the third act is another brilliant instance of refined art, worked into effective presentation of a situation needful to the plot and movement of a weird drama. The closing scene realized in beauty, skillful adap-

tation to stage effect, and combination of ethereal with earthly loveliness, all those preparatory laudations which had followed it from London.

The scenes we have named are sufficient in their presentation to secure a success for any piece, and the enthusiastic demands for another glimpse at the finale sets, conclusively prove the intense public favor which awaits their exhibition. Beside these admirable combinations for scenic effect, the truly grand ballet corps, headed by Sangalli, Bonfanti, and Righl, is so far in advance of such demonstrations in New York, that pleasurable excitement emanates from their combination with exquisitely beautiful scenery in such extraordinary amount as to make success for the "Black Crook" a positive certainty.

In connection with the interlude and ballet music, we have to remark that much of it falls below its aim, neither amusing the waiting audience or putting the dancers in their best light before them. Mr. Baker usually arranges interesting music, and for accompaniment to dancing contrives efficient harmony, but we cannot accept his offerings here as equal to his own reputation, or the exigencies of each situation for the ballet. There is some excuse for such inadequacy in that to be found in the inadequate orchestra which interprets his ideas, yet with that allowance he falls short of the brilliant opportunity afforded. The "Pas des Sabots," "Pas des Fleurs," "Pas des Nudes," "Pas des Demons," "Pas Espanol," and "Dance des Amazons," develop in brilliant and generally satisfactory exhibition the capabilities of Jarrett and Palmer's great ballet troupe, the latter captivating the public eye more intensely than any other by his novel and effective working under Costa's personal supervision.

Opinions and fancies differ widely in respect to Messrs. Jarrett and Palmer's three principal danseuses, who are styled "Premier Danseurs Absolutes," the popular ideal being Sangalli, while those who judge by artistic rules prefer either Bonfanti, that fairy executant, or Righl, as more thoroughly accomplished in their art. While assenting to hearty praise of all three in concerted ballet movement, we consider Bonfanti to be the very impersonation of grace, lightness, and truth in rapid execution, where she approaches Fanny Elser more nearly than any celebrity in dance we have witnessed, since that peerless danseuse set this country in a blaze of enthusiastic rapture, by her wonderful combination of all the great qualifications for a Premier Danseur Absolu.

The "Black Crook," now that its playing time has been substantially brought within three hours, will undoubtedly run successfully for months to come, and may surpass "Rosedale" both in number of performances and contributions to its manager's treasury. Mr. Wheatley has deserved success, by putting a brilliant spectacle on his stage with all requisite accessories; so the rush to see it and the great accessions to his bank account which follow each night of the "Black Crook," will be graciously viewed by that public he worked hard to propitiate.

NEW YORK THEATRE.—On Monday evening last, Messrs. Smith and Baker produced the popular fairy extravaganza, "The Beauty and the Beast," prefaced with a lively one scene farce, "A Regular Fix," in which Mr. Rankin displayed